Eminem Scuffle With Heckling Fan Taints Show

Controversial rapper leaps from stage to confront audience member at Sunday night gig in San Francisco.
By Gil Kaufman
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SAN FRANCISCO -- Taking a page from talk-show host Jerry Springer's textbook, rapper Eminem dived off the stage Sunday night to attack a concert-goer, causing fans to scurry and interrupting the hip-hopper's brief set.

Like a scene out of Springer's popular TV show, Eminem (born Marshall Mathers) got into a yelling match with two patrons who were heckling the 24-year-old MC during his performance at the Fillmore Auditorium.

With funk pioneer and fellow Detroit native George Clinton by his side, Eminem tried to have one heckler kicked out by security. When the war of words continued with a second heckler, Eminem took action with the help of his onstage rapping colleague, Royce the 5'9".

"You paid for my show, so why are you talking so much sh--?" Eminem screamed at one of the hecklers. Dressed in a white T-shirt and navy jogging pants, the platinum-haired MC had performed roughly one-third of his set in front of a nearly sold-out crowd of more than 1,000 when the incident occurred.

"I could get all these motherf---ers in this place [the rest of the audience] to kick your ass if we wanted," said Royce in support of Eminem.

When the heckler did not back down, Eminem dove toward him headfirst with his fists leading the way. Eminem's onstage bodyguard followed the rapper into the crowd, as did members of the venue's security team.

The auditorium lights were turned on once Eminem left the stage, with half the crowd surging forward to get a better look and the other half fleeing toward the door.

A spokesperson for the Fillmore could not be reached for comment.

The mêlée lasted roughly two minutes and ended with Eminem escorted backstage and the heckler strong-armed out the door. It was unclear at press time whether Eminem made physical contact with the heckler or if the heckler sustained any injury. As of Tuesday (May 11), no charges had been filed in connection with the incident, according to Benita Disilva of the San Francisco Police Department.

Shortly after the scuffle, Eminem, who appeared only slightly ruffled, came back to the stage and said people should not "mess with someone from the street" and that anyone who disrespects him will pay the price.

In addition to the playful hit single, "My Name Is" (RealAudio excerpt), Eminem's platinum-selling major-label debut, *The Slim Shady LP,* features such violence-themed songs as

"Brain Damage" (RealAudio excerpt) and "97 Bonnie & Clyde" (RealAudio excerpt).

Radio DJ Davey D., a longtime staple in the San Francisco Bay Area hip-hop scene, attended the show and lamented the violence that marred the event.

"It's been hard enough for Bay Area rappers like E-40 and Rappin' 4-Tay to get shows," Davey D. said, "because of the perception that their shows will bring a rowdy crowd, and now Eminem picks a fight and sets off a brawl?"

Anna Loynes, a spokesperson for Eminem, had no comment on the fight.

Prior to the mêlée, Eminem prowled the stage, bragging about a *Time* magazine article that accused him of promoting violence. "I do promote violence and I don't give a f---," he claimed, launching into the song "Just Don't Give a F---."

The rapper created a different kind of drama Saturday night during a show at the House of Blues in Los Angeles when he was joined onstage by Academy Award-winning actor Dustin Hoffman ("The Graduate," "Tootsie").

According to Loynes, Hoffman escorted his children to an all-ages show

by Eminem -- the first of two shows at the venue that night. That was

followed by a Hoffman family dinner at the venue's exclusive Foundations

Room.

Hoffman asked to be introduced to the rapper and told him he had enjoyed

the show. Before Hoffman was escorted to the side of the stage to view

the night's second concert with his children, he inquired about the mummy

costume usually worn by one of Eminem's crew.

In Loynes' account, Hoffman agreed to dress up in the costume that is

part of the artwork to the *The Slim Shady LP* and dance during a

few of Eminem's songs.

Loynes said Eminem asked the audience if they wanted to know who was behind the bandages, then he pointed as a sweaty Hoffman emerged from the costume. As Hoffman left the stage, Loynes said the actor was overheard telling a stagehand, "Boy, it's hot in there."